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ABSTRACT

Information on participation, funding, and administration of forensics programs at state-supported community colleges in Illinois was sought through surveying all 37 state-supported community colleges. Responses were received from 20 (54%) of the schools surveyed. Results of the study indicated: (1) about one-third of the state-supported community colleges in Illinois reported having an active forensics program; (2) intercollegiate competition in individual events was more frequent than debate competition both in terms of student participation and number of tournaments attended annually; (3) competition occurs against both two and four-year schools, mainly in the midwest; (4) some workshops are scheduled as part of the forensics experience; (5) average forensics budgets were $4,499 annually; (6) compensation for coaches included both released time and monetary compensation; and (7) most of the schools surveyed anticipated more growth in their forensics programs in the future. (Author/JDS)

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Community College Forensics Programs In Illinois

by

Diana Corley

In order to determine the status of forensics at the community college level and to provide assistance in planning the 1976 - 1977 forensics program at Black Hawk College, the author sought information on participation, funding and administration of forensics programs at state supported community colleges in Illinois. That information is shared with others in the state.

Design

The author sent an introductory letter and questionnaire to all state and public supported community colleges in the state as listed in College Facts Chart. (n=37)[1]

Results

Returns were received from 54% of the schools. (n=20) Based on lists of participating schools from various tournaments, it is believed that those who do have an active program did return the questionnaire so the results are representative of the Illinois Community College Forensic Programs.

Twelve community colleges in Illinois reported participation in intercollegiate competition. Of the twelve, nine participate in individual events only (hereafter referred to as I.E.) while one participates in debate only and three participate in both debate and individual events with individual events being the stronger in terms of number of student participants and number of tournaments attended annually.

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(See table #1). The number of tournaments attended in I.E. ranges from two to fifteen. The average number of I.E. tournaments schools attend is nine. The number of students participating in I.E. ranges from five to thirty, with the average number being seven. The number of students participating in debate ranges from six to eight. Exact total amount of participation is difficult to obtain becuase some tournaments overlap, that is they feature both debate and I.E.; and some students participate in both debate and I.E. Hence at Black Hawk, for example, actually only three tournaments - not four - were attended and only twelve students - not sixteen - participated. This will be true for other schools as well, but figures for each area of participation are exact as reported.

Participation in fourteen separate areas of I.E. was specified by those responding. (See Table 2). Public speaking and oral interprepation events are strong in all of the schools, but radio, television, listening and discussion draw less interest.

The schools reported attending a total of twenty-three separate tournaments. Of those, the most popular are Du Page, Highland, Bradley Novice, L.E. Norton at Bradley, Rock Valley, Illinois State, Northern University of Wisconsin at Whitewater, and Phi Rho Pi state, national, and regional tournaments. In addition six community colleges host their own tournaments. All schools compete against both two year and four year schools.

Budgets range from $1800 annually to $7400. Both of these figures are exceptional in that the most frequently occurring budget figures are $3000- $5000. Among ten schools reporting budget, the average budget is $4499. The source of the funds is usually the student activities fund. In two cases administrative funds are used. A spot check by telephone clarified that these budgets are for total travel expenses. Travel is generally by rental car or by school car or

school van. Two schools reported using faculty members cars with milage reimbursement. On school my fly to tournaments that are distant such as national tournaments.

Half of the schools use only one coach; four schools use two coaches, and one school uses four coaches.

Compensation includes both released time and money. Time ranges from none at all, a practice the coach says he will not continue, to released time equivalent to one course. Monetary compensation is quite common with pay for coaches ranging from $600 to $2250.

Other comments received from the survey concern anticipated changes in the program:

1. more help for the coach (Belleville)
2. "debate fizzled" (Joliet)
3. "We're growing" (Illinois Valley)
4. "Enthusiastic students have been in I.E.; Debate just hasn't caught fire." (Joliet)
5. Will attempt more of a community public performance within the district if budget is significantly reduced. (Parkland)
6. "Because of our experiences with the two forms of performance activity, in the future, I have decided we will eliminate more of the tournament activities and add more workshops to our travel schedule. We will still attend some tournaments for students whose events are other than interp events and for whom no workshop experiences exist. (Sauk Valley)
7. "To me, forensics programs are one of the most educational tools in the speech program. All schools should have them." (State CC)
8. expansion is anticipated (Triton)

Conclusions

About one third of the state community colleges in the state report having active forensics programs. Individual events are stronger than debate in terms of the amount of participation. Competition occurs against both two year and four year schools, mainly in the midwest. Some workshops are scheduled as part of the forensics experience. Average budget is $4499 annually. Compensation for coaches includes both released time and monetary compensation. Most of the schools anticipate more growth in their programs.

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Footnotes

[1] College Facts Chart 1971 - 1972, (Spartanburg, South Carolina: National Beta Club, 1972) pp. 13 - 20.

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